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ABSTRACT

This document presents the questionnaire and results of a state government information needs assessment by the South Carolina State Library. The survey was designed to identify job-related information needs and to help State Library staff members improve their services. Of the 300 surveys mailed to state government employees, 142 were returned. Names were selected at random from the list of registered borrowers and from the employees. The following topics were covered: (1) the types of information or materials needed for work; (2) where the information for work is obtained; (3) what (if any) materials preparation is included in the job; (4) job functions; (5) who in the office helps get the information; (6) available materials and sources; (7) whether the State Library resources or services are used; (8) how contact is made with the State Library; (9) reasons for not using the services; (10) State Library services provided to state employees, and the frequency of their use; (11) whether the State Library hours are accommodating; (12) future services that would be useful; (13) impressions of the State Library; (14) other services and programs that the State Library should provide; and (15) whether the office (of the surveyed) has information resources that the State Library could use or refer to. The document contains the survey instrument and the results of each question. (AEF)

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South Carolina State Library State Government Information Needs Survey

Columbia, S.C.: South Carolina State Library

1994

2

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South Carolina State Library State Government Information Needs Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey. It is designed to identify your job-related information needs and to help State Library staff members improve their services accordingly. Please feel free to make any additional comments at the end of this survey.

Agency _____

Division/Section _____ Position (optional) _____

1. What types of information or materials do you need for your work? Check all that apply.

Frequently	Occasionally	
☐	☐	Directory information (addresses, telephone numbers, etc.)
☐	☐	General background information on a topic or issue
☐	☐	Government regulations/legislation
☐	☐	Information on what other states are doing
☐	☐	Personnel management/ staff or organizational development topics
☐	☐	Information on SC state government
☐	☐	Statistical information
☐	☐	Books, journal articles, reports, etc. on specific topics
☐	☐	Federal government publications
☐	☐	SC state government publications
☐	☐	Newspapers and journals
☐	☐	Audiovisual materials
☐	☐	Other (please specify): _____

2. Where do you obtain information you need to perform your work? Check all that apply.

Frequently	Occasionally	
☐	☐	Other state or federal agencies
☐	☐	Organizations, associations
☐	☐	Colleagues in my field
☐	☐	Identified experts on a subject
☐	☐	My agency's research unit
☐	☐	Office/personal information files or collections
☐	☐	State Library services
☐	☐	Libraries other than State Library (please specify): _____
☐	☐	Computer databases
☐	☐	Other (please specify): _____

3. Does your job include preparation of any of the following? Check all that apply.

Frequently

Occasionally

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | ☐ | Reports or background papers |
| ☐ | ☐ | Bibliographies |
| ☐ | ☐ | Research studies |
| ☐ | ☐ | Speeches or other types of presentations |
| ☐ | ☐ | Market studies or research |
| ☐ | ☐ | Statistical analyses |
| ☐ | ☐ | Reviews or summaries of current research or developments on a specific topic |
| ☐ | ☐ | Manuals |
| ☐ | ☐ | Policy statements |
| ☐ | ☐ | Advisory reports or proposals |
| ☐ | ☐ | Planning documents |
| ☐ | ☐ | Technical documents |
| ☐ | ☐ | Newsletters/Magazines |
| ☐ | ☐ | Information packets for agency clients |
| ☐ | ☐ | Other (please specify): _____ |

4. Does your job include any of these functions? Check all that apply.

Frequently

Occasionally

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | Staff training and development |
| ☐ | ☐ | Program evaluation |
| ☐ | ☐ | Curriculum development |
| ☐ | ☐ | Audits |
| ☐ | ☐ | Public information |
| ☐ | ☐ | Grants writing/seeking |
| ☐ | ☐ | Other (please specify): _____ |

5. In your office, who helps you get the information you need? Check all that apply.

Frequently

Occasionally

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ | ☐ | I do it myself |
| ☐ | ☐ | Research assistant |
| ☐ | ☐ | Secretary/administrative assistant |
| ☐ | ☐ | Executive assistant |
| ☐ | ☐ | Colleagues |
| ☐ | ☐ | Page or intern |
| ☐ | ☐ | Other (please specify): _____ |

6. Does your agency make available for your work any of the following? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Books |
| ☐ | Magazines |
| ☐ | Newspapers |
| ☐ | Government reports or publications |
| ☐ | Videotapes, audiocassettes, or other audiovisual materials |
| ☐ | Computer searching of in-house databases |
| ☐ | Computer searching of remote databases or electronic bulletin boards |
| ☐ | Commercial computerized informational products (CD-ROM, etc.) |
| ☐ | Internet access |
| ☐ | Electronic mail (E-mail) systems |
| ☐ | Other (please specify): _____ |

7. Have you ever used the resources or services of the South Carolina State Library?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, how often? Once a year ☐ Once a month ☐ More than once a month ☐

8. If your answer to #7 was yes, how do you make contact with the library? Check all that apply.

☐ Visit the library
☐ Telephone the library
☐ Fax the library
☐ Assistant does it for me
☐ Use dial-up access to the library's computer database

9. If your answer to #7 was no, please check below all reasons that apply.

☐ Library is too far away
☐ Library does not have the material I need
☐ Library is not open when I could use it
☐ I did not know I could use it
☐ I did not know what services or materials were available
☐ I have everything I need at my office
☐ I do not have time to use the library
☐ I cannot leave work during work hours to use the library
☐ Other (please specify): _____

10. The following list indicates several services that the South Carolina State Library provides to state employees. After each, please indicate how frequently you use the service and how helpful it is to you in your job.

(a) Librarians who will find and select information and resource materials for me in response to job-related needs.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

(b) Computer searches of informational databases.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

(c) Copying of work-related magazine articles or portions of other materials (books, microfilm) within reasonable quantity limits.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

(d) Borrowing books and obtaining photocopies of magazine/journal articles from other libraries for my job-related needs.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

- (e) Requesting that the State Library purchase work-related materials for the State Library's collection.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

- (f) Orientation programs at your office or tours of State Library.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

- (g) Staff development and training videotapes/audiocassettes.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

- (h) New Resources, a monthly publication listing new State Library materials.

Used? ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Not Aware of Service ☐

Useful? very ☐ somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

Please comment further on any of the above.

11. The South Carolina State Library is presently open 8:15a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. Do these hours accommodate your need to accomplish work-related research?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, what hours would be useful to you? _____

12. If the State Library offered the following services in the future, would you find them useful? Check all that apply.

☐ Computerized searching to track federal legislation and regulations and to obtain full-text copies of pending legislation.

☐ Computerized searching of the South Carolina legislative tracking database.

☐ Courier delivery to your office of library materials checked out on your library card.

☐ Rapid document delivery; i.e., library would order needed materials not available in library's collection from commercial vendors for a \$10 to \$50 fee per item. Please check all that apply.

☐ yes, I would be willing to pay costs myself

☐ yes, if library paid for service

☐ yes, if my agency paid for this service

13. What is your impression of the State Library? Please respond even if you are not very familiar with the library's services.

Staff courtesy and friendliness

Favorable___ Unfavorable___ None___

Speed of response to your requests

Favorable___ Unfavorable___ None___

Staff knowledge/skill

Favorable___ Unfavorable___ None___

Convenience of access

Favorable___ Unfavorable___ None___

Information and services available

Favorable___ Unfavorable___ None___

Please comment further on any of the above.

14. What other services/programs would you suggest that the State Library provide in order to help meet your information needs at work?

15. Does your office have information resources that the State Library could use or refer others to your office to use when necessary?

yes___ no___

If yes, please specify _____

Optional: If you would like to be contacted by a SC State Library reference librarian to discuss your specific information needs, please provide your name and phone number or call 734-8666 and ask for Reference.

Name _____ Phone _____

Thank you for completing this survey. The information you provided will be extremely helpful in evaluating our present services and planning for new services.

Please return survey in the pre-addressed envelope provided. **Note:** Survey may be returned via interagency mail to eliminate postage.

Results of Survey of Information needs of State Government

Of the 300 surveys mailed to state government employees, 142 were returned to the State Library. Names were selected at random from the list of registered borrowers and from the mailing list for New Resources, a monthly publication of the library mailed to selected state employees. Prior to the large mailing, a smaller mailing was made to 20 selected state government employees in order to test the survey form and elicit comments on the form itself. Nineteen of the twenty forms were returned which included several very helpful comments.

Question #1: What types of information or materials do you need for your work? Responses are listed in order of occurrence:

1. Books (122)
2. Background information (117)
3. Government regulations and legislation (103)
4. Information on what other states are doing (101)
5. Statistical information (92)
6. Information on SC state government (86)
7. Federal government publications (83)
8. Directory information (82)
9. Newspapers (80), and SC state government publications (80)
10. Personnel management (75)
11. Audiovisual materials (70)

Other items mentioned were maps, information on industry groups, federal grants announcements, place-name locations, bill status, "who's who" type information, research advice, and trivia (for production of radio program).

Question #2: Where do you obtain information you need for your work? Responses listed in order of occurrence:

1. State Library (120)
2. Other state or federal agencies (118)
3. Colleagues in my field (112)
4. Organizations and associations (104)
5. Identified experts (96)
6. Office/personal information files (79)
7. Other libraries (71) Libraries listed in order of occurrence were USC, RCPL, Law Library at USC, Archives, Attorney General, W.S. Hall Instit., USC Medical Library, Clemson, South Caroliniana, and Supreme Court
8. Computer databases (55)
9. Agency's own research unit (44)

Other sources listed included commercial services, newsletters, seminars, and SC Office of Human Resources.

Question #3: Does your job include preparation of any of the following? Responses listed in order of occurrence:

1. Reports or background papers (97)
2. Speeches (89)
3. Research studies (76)
4. Manuals (75)
5. Reviews or summaries of current research (74), and policy statements (74)
6. Statistical analyses (69)
7. Newsletters/magazines (68)
8. Planning documents (66)
9. Advisory reports (62)
10. Information packets for agency clients (59)
11. Technical documents (54)
12. Market studies (43)
13. Bibliographies (39)

Other items listed included lesson plans, grant proposals and applications, general research in various topics, legislative updates, and preparation of information used by co-workers.

Question #4: Does your job include any of these functions? Responses listed in order of occurrence:

1. Staff training (92)
2. Program evaluation (87)
3. Public information (83)
4. Grants writing/seeking (57)
5. Curriculum development (53)
6. Audits (44)

Other responses included art work for printing and support services, statewide planning, financial, printing specifications, scientific research, program production, legislative and regulatory, and keeping department informed of changes and new developments.

Question #5: In your office, who helps you get the information you need? Responses listed in order of occurrence:

1. I do it myself (132)
2. Colleagues, (77)
3. Secretary/Administrative Assistant (69)
4. Research Assistant (30)
5. Page or Intern (28)
6. Executive Assistant (22)

Other responses included editorial assistant, agency librarian, temporary help, consultants and vendors, law clerks, staff attorneys, and other departments within own agency.

Question #6: Does your agency make available for your work any of the following? Responses listed in order of occurrence:

1. Government reports or publications (102)
2. Magazines (93)
3. Books (85)
4. Videotapes, audiocassettes, etc. (68)
5. Electronic mail (e-mail) systems (66)
6. Newspapers (55)
7. Computer searching in-house (50)
8. Computer searching of remote databases (31)
9. Internet (22)
10. Commercial computer products (14)

Other responses included manuals, voice mail and conference calling, medical materials at the DHEC Library, interoffice communication system, and organizational newsletters.

Question #7: Have you ever used the resources or services of the State Library?

- 133 replied yes and 4 replied no
- 47 used more than once a month
- 43 used once a month, and 35 used once a year

Other responses included two to three times a year, 3 to 4 times a year, and several times a year.

Question #8: If your answer to #7 was yes, how do you make contact with the library? Responses are listed in order of occurrence:

1. Visit the library (118)
2. Telephone the library (101)
3. Assistant does it for me (24)
4. Fax the library (20)
5. Use dial-access (12)

Question #9: If your answer to #7 was no, list reasons that apply.

- 4 responses indicated I did not know what services or materials were available
- 2 responses indicated I do not have time to use the library

Question #10: The following list indicates several services that the South Carolina State Library provides to state employees. After each, please indicate how frequently you use the service and how helpful it is to you in your job. "Frequent" use response listed in order of occurrence:

1. Librarians (59)
2. New Resources (55)
3. Interlibrary loan (52)
4. Copying of work-related magazine articles (50)
5. Computer searches (35)
6. Audiovisual materials on staff development and training (15)
7. Purchase of work-related materials (9)
8. Orientation programs (3)

"Very useful" response listed in order of occurrence:

1. Librarians (103)
2. Interlibrary loan (90)
3. Copying of work-related magazine articles (86)
4. Computer searches (65)
5. New Resources (48)
6. Audiovisual materials on staff development and training (36)
7. Purchase of work-related materials (26)
8. Orientation programs (17)

Question #11: The South Carolina State Library is presently open 8:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and on Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.. Do these hours accommodate your need to accomplish work-related tasks?

128 responded yes and 9 responded no. Suggestions for other hours included: 8:15 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and one response for Sunday hours.

Question #12: If the State Library offered the following services in the future, would you find them useful? Listed in order of occurrence of response:

1. Courier delivery to your office of library materials checked out on your library card (81)
2. Computerized tracking of federal legislation and regulations (73)
3. Computerized searching of the South Carolina legislative tracking database (70)
4. Rapid document delivery from commercial vendors (57). On response #4, 57 responded that they would be interested if their agency paid the costs, 32 were interested if the State Library paid the costs and 4 were interested if they had to pay the costs themselves.

Question #13: What is your impression of the State Library? Responses listed according to occurrence of "favorable" impression:

1. Staff knowledge and skill (135)
2. Staff courtesy and friendliness (134)
3. Speed of response (132)
4. Convenience of access (128)
5. Information and services available (100)

Other comments received are listed on a separate page.

Questions #14: What other services and programs would you suggest that the State Library provide...?

Responses listed on separate sheet.

Question #15: Does your office have information resources that the State Library could use or refer others to your office to use when necessary?

46 responded no, 45 responded yes, and 3 responded "not sure." Some items are listed on separate sheet.

**Written Comments Received on South Carolina State Library Government
Information Needs Survey**

Question #13 What is your impression of the State Library?

All employees I've dealt with have been very helpful.

The State Library is quite resourceful to this agency (DSS) and many of my colleagues. In my capacity as DSS Ombudsman, I do not use it as much.

One of the most responsive and friendliest staffs I have observed/seen in state government.

Except for Saturday morning, hours are not convenient for after hours work during week.

Courier service would be great. I sometimes get loaned materials back to the library in a timely manner because I have to make a special trip.

Amazed and impressed by staff.

Extremely helpful and accommodating.

Thanks for your help!

Knowledgeable and responsive.

Information is received on a timely basis.

Nothing but praise.

Couldn't do my job without you.

Parking is sometimes a problem.

Extremely pleased with the services.

Don't claim to serve "SC citizens" when students and others are frequently turned away.

Need brochure outlining purposes and services.

Your staff is terrific! They can always answer my questions.

You need serious help in formatting surveys.

I think you are super.

Excellent

Need parking that is not metered.

Repeatedly, service has been expert, prompt, friendly.

Excellent staff and facility.

Staff knowledgeable.

Staff always helpful.

Access to Lion very important since I am distant from building.

Everyone professional and helpful and efficient. Provide a valuable service.

Knowledgeable, warm, welcoming. Continue great service.

I have had only great service from the reference librarians.

Staff services are always good.

All staff members have provided extremely courteous and helpful service when called upon for assistance.

Professional assistance expertly delivered.

Staff are extremely helpful in responding to questions/needs. They provide a valuable service!

I have always been pleased with the willingness of staff to assist in a research/information request.

The staff always go the extra mile.

Ms. Deborah Hotchkiss is very knowledgeable about resources and very courteous.

Staff are very helpful and knowledgeable.

I consider you my friends, and usually ask for individuals by name when I need info and our librarian is not available.

Parking is limited on street. The items listed on #12 would help access as well as programs promoting services in state agency facilities. You all may need to come to us and present to large group to update and make aware.

Excellent service; resources more than adequate.

Excellent staff courtesy, professional quality service; staff exceeds other area libraries' staff.

- Staff is one of the great treasures of SC...pleasant, professional, bordering on miraculous at times.

Haven't used the State Library; hope others at DHEC received questionnaire since many use the library.

Tops in all areas.

Provides needed service for work I do.

Our biggest complaint is the inability to browse and having to have one of the staff to get books.

Very pleased.

The library staff is an excellent example of customer service at its best.

I have nothing but the highest praise for the library staff I have come in contact with and have come to know.

I wish they had a larger selection of magazines, but I realize because of costs, etc., they had to cut back. But I can make do.

Question #14: What other programs /services would you suggest that the State Library provide in order to help meet your information needs at work?

Comments listed below.

Love the delivery idea; there is only one of me.

It would be useful if all employees knew the services available through the State Library.

Not any that I can think of.

Please provide more information on starting small libraries, and setting up of research documents where people can retrieve information easily, where it would be simple to keep up with.

More electronic information resources.

Satisfied as is.

User guide to CD-ROM products available at library.

State and federal legislative tracking would help tremendously.

Brochure.

Grants research.

More management training materials so waiting list won't be so long.

Business book best-sellers.

My needs are met.

More TQM materials.

Conference/meeting space.

Internet access.

More social work materials.

Longer hours and better accessibility.

Office space.

Offer services to everyone. You're funded by everyone's money, taxes!

A list of available services and resources.

Collaborate with other libraries, i.e., Allen University, Benedict College, USC, and Columbia College.

DHEC-EQC districts can't take advantage of all services, i.e. courier delivery not available.

Reintroduce your services to different state agencies - not just the fact that you are there but what services are offered.

All needs being met.

We (DHEC) need to respond rapidly and/or collect information highly specific to a problem or new program, so I rely almost exclusively on CDC (Center for Disease Control) info., MMWR's, in-house experts. Back when I had long-term projects, I would check out a stack of books. Now, books are not useful because of the timeliness of projects needed. But I am out of date on how the State Library could be useful, so I need an update. In fact, I don't even use our own (DHEC) Library because the docs here pull the articles related to a topic and pass them on to me or others. I could use an orientation/tour for both libraries to update me. I have used our computer bank to search for certain topics. I miss the days when I would come in and research for my articles - and see the new books on display.

Question #15: Does your office have information resources that the State Library could use or refer others to your office to use? Mentioned resources listed below.

Comptroller General: Annual Financial report, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, policies and procedures manual.

A small, but good collection on higher education.

Medical materials library (you are already doing referrals).

Pond and game management services.

Nursing database, including number and type of nurses, employment settings, etc. (Bd. of Nursing).

Annual reports, video resource catalogs, program schedules (ETV).

Resources on child abuse and neglect, but the information is not available for loan to non-DSS employees.

State Government Quality Network Resource Room with videos, books and information from other states.

Corrections-related data.

SC county maps and municipal maps for sale.

Historic info on state parks.

Educational statistics.

DHEC- public relations, solid waste and recycling center

In-house library of disabilities-related information and materials.

LAC (Legislative Audit Council) reports.

Genealogy, historic records, archival information (Archives & History)

We are developing a real estate lending library (Real Estate Comm.)

Audiovisual library (Dept. of Transportation)

Traffic information on all SC counties, information on traffic engineering.

Developmental Disabilities and Special Needs: small library and videos on mental retardation, autism, head & spinal cord injuries available to public for checkout.

Legislative publications of SC and other states.

Ethics Comm.: National newsletters and publications.

TEC: statistical data, instruction and curriculum coordination.